The President's Radio Address
September 6, 2008

Good morning. Throughout the past week, Americans anxiously watched weather conditions in the Gulf Coast region. The people of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas were well prepared for Hurricane Gustav, and the coordination between these States and the Federal Government was strong.

Now we're focusing on the relief effort. Gustav caused damage to infrastructure, forced tens of thousands into shelters, and left more than a million people without power. The Federal Government is working with State and local officials to repair this damage, to help residents get back home, and to return life in the region to normal as soon as possible.

While these relief efforts have been in progress, we've also been preparing for the arrival of storms like Hanna, Ike, and others that may follow. My administration will continue to provide assistance to those affected by violent weather throughout this hurricane season. And we will continue to work diligently to coordinate our emergency response efforts with State and local governments.

While the Federal Government continues this vital work, there are also important responsibilities awaiting Members of Congress as they return to Washington. In just a few weeks, Members will be back out on the campaign trail, emphasizing the differences between the two parties. But before they leave Washington, they should show that they can work together on bipartisan measures to help strengthen America's economy, measures like approving the Colombia and Korean free trade agreements, extending relief from the Alternative Minimum Tax, and addressing one of the American people's biggest concerns, the high price of gasoline.

The fundamental reason for high gasoline prices is that the supply of oil is not keeping pace with demand. By increasing supply through the use of our domestic resources, we can begin reducing the pressure on prices. So in June, I called on Congress to open up more of America's domestic oil resources for exploration, including offshore exploration of the Outer Continental Shelf. The American people overwhelmingly support this proposal. But throughout the summer, the leaders of the Democratic Congress refused to allow it to come to a vote.

At the very least, Congress should take action on three commonsense energy solutions that enjoy bipartisan support.

First, Congress should open the way for environmentally responsible offshore exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf. Experts believe that these areas could eventually produce nearly 10 years worth of America's current annual oil production. This exploration is now banned by a provision included in the annual Interior appropriations bill. Congress should remove this restriction immediately.

Second, Congress should expand access to oil shale, a domestic resource that could produce the equivalent of more than a century's worth of imports at current levels. Last year, however, Democratic leaders slipped a provision blocking oil shale leasing on Federal lands into an omnibus spending bill. They should lift that ban immediately.

Third, Congress should extend renewable power tax credits to spur the development of alternative sources of energy like wind and solar. They should make these credits long-term and expand them to cover all forms of low-emission power generation, including nuclear power. In the long run, increasing production of low-carbon electricity can help us reduce our addiction to

oil by allowing us to power a new genera-
tion of plug-in hybrid and hydrogen-pow-
ered vehicles.

This Congress has earned a reputation
as one of the least productive in history.
Throughout this year, Democratic leaders
have ignored the public's demand for relief
from high energy prices. This is their final
chance to take action before the November
elections. If Members of Congress do not
support the American people at the gas
pump, then they should not expect the
American people to support them at the
ballot box.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:30 p.m.
on September 4 at Camp David, MD, for
broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 6. The
transcript was made available by the Office
of the Press Secretary on September 5, but
was embargoed for release until the broad-
cast. The Office of the Press Secretary also
released a Spanish language transcript of this
address.

Statement on the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac Corporations
September 7, 2008

Today the Federal Housing Finance
Agency (FHFA), the regulator of Fannie
Mae and Freddie Mac, determined that
these housing mortgage companies cannot
continue to operate safely and soundly and
fulfill their public mission, posing an unac-
ceptable risk to the broader financial sys-
tem and our economy. FHFA announced
that it will place the companies in con-
servatorship and appoint new leadership.

The Treasury Department and the Fed-
eral Reserve are taking additional steps that
complement FHFA's actions and will sup-
port market stability, add to mortgage avail-
ability, and protect taxpayers. These agen-
cies are taking the necessary steps to pre-
vent a disruption of our financial system.

Putting these companies on sound finan-
cial footing and reforming their business
practices is critical to the health of our
financial system and to making further
progress with the housing correction that
today is weighing heavily on our economy.
Allowing the companies to fail or further
deteriorate would damage our home mort-
gage market and could weaken other credit
markets that are unrelated directly to hous-
ing. Americans should be confident that the
actions taken today will strengthen our abil-
ity to weather the housing correction and
are critical to returning the economy to
stronger sustained growth in the future.

The actions taken today are temporary
and will support housing finance in the
near term. As we determine the appro-
priate role for the companies in the future,
it is crucial that they not pose similar risks
to our economy or the financial system
again.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also
released a Spanish language version of this
statement.